

WASHINGTON STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

OFFICE OF FARMLAND PRESERVATION NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2015

[HTTP://OFP.SCC.WA.GOV/](http://ofp.scc.wa.gov/)

VOLUME 9, ISSUE 9

Sales from Washington Organic Farms Up 82 Percent, USDA Reports

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) recently released the results of the 2014 Organic Survey, which show that 716 certified and exempt organic farms in Washington sold a total of \$515 million in organic products in 2014, up 82 percent since 2008.

Nationally, 14,093 certified and exempt organic farms in the United States sold a total of \$5.5 billion in organic products in 2014, up 72 percent since 2008.

The top 10 states in sales accounted for 78 percent of U.S. organic sales in 2014, with California leading the nation with \$2.2 billion.

Additionally, the industry in Washington shows potential for growth in production as approximately 257 organic producers (39 percent) report that they intend to increase organic production in Washington over the next five years.

The vast majority of organic agricultural products sold in 2014 were sold close to the farm. According to the report, the first point of sale for 72 percent of all Washington organic products was less than 500 miles from the farm, compared to 60 percent in 2008. Of the sales of organic products in 2014:

- 41 percent were sold within 100 miles
- 31 percent were sold 101-499 miles
- 25 percent were sold 500 or more miles
- 3 percent were sold internationally

Survey results are available at www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/Organic_Survey/



Farm Bill: Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP)

Livestock grazers in certain Washington counties may be eligible for the Livestock Forage Disaster Program.

The following link is a map showing counties eligible by drought for the Livestock Forage Program in Washington for 2015. http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/lfp_map_sept1_2015.pdf.

The different colors on the map represent how many months of LFP payments for which livestock producers may be eligible.

LFP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers that have suffered grazing losses for covered livestock on land that is native or improved pastureland with permanent vegetative cover or is planted specifically for grazing. The grazing losses must be due to a qualifying drought condition during the normal grazing period for the county. LFP also provides compensation to eligible livestock producers that have suffered grazing losses on rangeland managed by a federal agency if the eligible livestock producer is prohibited by the federal agency from grazing the normal permitted livestock on the managed rangeland due to a qualifying fire.

Program information is available by going to: [2015 Livestock Forage Program \(PDF\)](#)

Livestock grazers should contact their local Farm Service Agency county office for more information. Contact information - <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=wa&agency=fsa>



Stay in contact and sign up for the OFP-Newsletter!

Email frequency is once a month

Sign up on the web at: <http://ofp.scc.wa.gov>

Business Training Program for Beginning Farmers Accepting Applications

[Sustainable Connections](#) is currently accepting applications for up to four new participants in the 2016 Food To Bank On project, a beginning farmer business training project facilitated by Sustainable Connections' Food & Farming Program.

The project provides farmers with business planning resources and experts, connects beginning farmers with mentor farmers, coordinates specialized workshops and provides new market opportunities. Participants are also paid to deliver fresh food to local food banks and shelters. Whatcom County food banks, soup kitchens and women's shelters have received over \$80,000 in fresh produce since the programs' start in 2003.



Food to Bank On applications are available on Sustainable Connection's [website](#) and are due October 15, 2015.

Profiles and photos of current farmers can also be found [online](#). For more information, contact Sara Southerland at sara@sconnect.org. For more information, contact Sara Southerland at sara@sconnect.org.

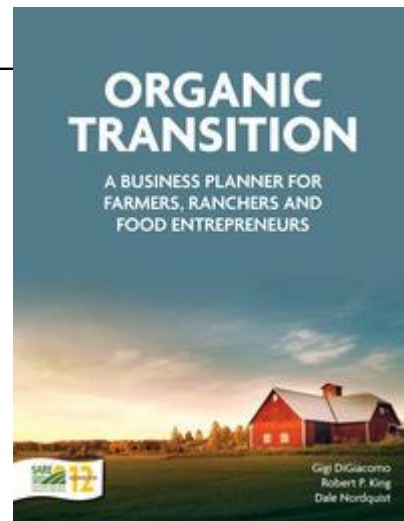
New Organic Transition Business Planner Now Available

The booming profit potential of organic production has farmers, ranchers and food business owners nationwide switching to organic production. But successfully managing the risky multi-year transition requires careful business planning.

Download [Organic Transition: A Business Planner for Farmers, Ranchers and Food Entrepreneurs](#) for free.

SARE's new Organic Transition: A Business Planner for Farmers, Ranchers and Food Entrepreneurs is the perfect tool to help business owners develop an actionable organic transition plan suitable for management teams and lenders. The Organic Transition Planner explores organic transition strategies and asks critical questions that help you decide whether organic makes sense for your farm or business.

Farmers bring the planning process alive by sharing their personal transition challenges and the business plans that helped them succeed. Minnesota dairy producers Nate and Angie Walter relate that going organic "was a way for us to remain a family farm. We were considering growing the farm (conventionally); getting bigger in hopes of paying off our debt. We knew that might be a losing proposition." The Organic Transition Planner also includes an overview of certification, helpful worksheets and AgPlan, a business planning software program that facilitates the business planning process.



The Organic Transition Planner can be used as a companion to SARE's popular business planning guide, [Building a Sustainable Business: A Guide to Developing a Business Plan for Farms and Rural Businesses](#).

Grant Opportunity - New and Underserved Farmers

[New Grants to Help New and Underserved Farmers Understand FSA Programs](#)

USDA has announced that \$2.5 million in grants is available for projects to educate new and underserved farmers about USDA Farm Service Agency programs that can provide financial, disaster, or technical assistance. Grants of \$20,000 to \$100,000 will be awarded to nonprofits and public higher education institutions for projects that improve farmer education on topics such as financial training, value-added production, recordkeeping, property inheritance, and crop-production practices. More details here: <http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentid=2015/09/0264.xml>

USDA will conduct four reviews of applications, with deadlines of November 20, 2015, and January 22, March 18, and May 27, 2016.

WA Livestock owner fined \$12,000 for manure pollution

[Full News Release](#)

FERNDALE – A livestock owner faces a \$12,000 penalty for polluting waterways that flow into California Creek in the Drayton Harbor watershed. The property, located outside of Ferndale, is owned by Jim and Victoria Snyder.



The Department of Ecology recently issued the fine. Ecology is part of a county-wide effort to reduce fecal coliform bacteria in public waterways.

Bacteria from manure pollution can pose a risk to human health, through direct contact or by eating contaminated shellfish. High levels of fecal coliform bacteria continue to seasonally limit recreational and commercial shellfish harvest in Drayton Harbor.

The penalty cites lack of adequate covered manure storage, improper manure spreading, and accumulations of manure in pastures and confinement areas that slope to water bodies, as factors that led to discharges. In addition, the animals have had direct access to the stream.

Ecology inspectors contacted the property owners in 2010 in response to a citizen complaint about pollution. In 2014, Ecology issued a notice of violation followed by a compliance order earlier this year which required the Snyders to submit a plan to stop pollution. Opportunities for technical and financial assistance to correct the problems were included in all correspondence with the landowners.

“We’ve made repeated attempts to work with the Snyders to help them make changes that would prevent pollution,” said Allen. “It’s unfortunate that we’ve gotten to this point.”

Review Ecology’s Immediate Action Order here: https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/wqreports/public/WQPERMITS.document_pkg.download_document?p_document_id=144589.

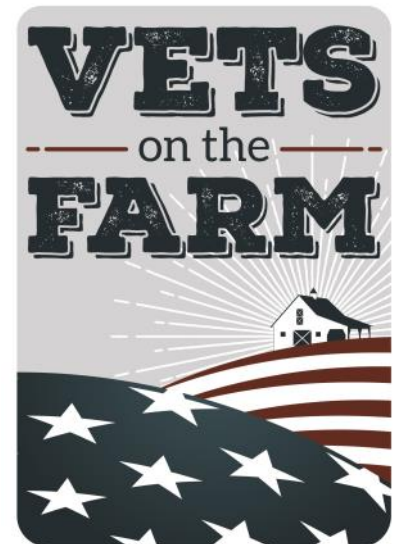
Tilth Producers 2015 Conference Highlight: Vets on the Farm

It’s a special year for the Spokane Conservation District, not only to be hosting Farm-A-Palouse-A in conjunction with Tilth Producers conference, but to proudly present ag education specifically for returning Veterans as part of their newest program, Vets on the Farm.

As an answer post 9/11 Veteran unemployment and an increasing need for more farmers, SCD created Vets on the Farm to provide year-round education, networking and mentoring for Veterans who seek a career in agriculture. The goal of Farm-A-Palouse-A on Friday, November 13, 2015, is to empower returning Veterans as well as new and beginning small farmers to begin the journey toward a career in agriculture through classes like I have property, now what?, Planning for Pollinators, Plastics and Season Extension and more. There is also a specific track of classes designed for Veterans including AgrAbility: adapting farm equipment and tasks, Incentives for Veterans and New Farmers, and a screening and director’s discussion of the film Ground Operations: From Battlefield to Farmfield at the historic Magic Lantern.

The cost to register for is \$75 and includes a light breakfast at the SCD Annual Meeting, and lunch. The SCD has a limited number of scholarships for Veterans to attend Farm-A-Palouse-A.

For questions about Vets on the Farm or to apply for scholarships, contact SCD Director Vicki Carter at vicki-carter@sccd.org.



WSU Reports to Congress on research innovations

The House Agriculture Subcommittee on Biotechnology, Horticulture, and Research, recently held a public hearing to review research innovations achieved by the nation's agricultural colleges and universities. Members heard from a panel of distinguished researchers, including WSU, representing some of the most prestigious agricultural colleges and universities in the country.

Written testimony provided by the witness is linked [here](#). Click [here](#) for more information, including Subcommittee Chairman Davis' [opening statement](#), and the archived [webcast](#).

Written testimony from Dr. James W. Moyer, Associate Dean for Research, at WSU's College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences is available [here](#).



Crop Progress and Condition Report - Week of Sept 29

NASS NW Regional Weekly Crop Progress and Condition Report

The rain in previous weeks helped rejuvenate the pastures in **western Washington**, as well as the soil moisture to some extent. Green chop was coming off thick. Growers reached the tail end of corn silage harvest while much of the harvest was already in the bunker. Apple harvest was underway in **Snohomish County**.

The winter wheat crop in **central Washington** suffered due to low soil moisture at seeding. The average temperatures were generally warmer during the days this reporting week with little precipitation. Colder weather in the mornings affected gardens and the trees started to turn color. Farmers were planting wheat. In **Klickitat County**, ranchers headed to the mountain and the cows slowly began to come home. The hop harvest remained in full swing. The apple harvest focused on mid-season varieties. Winter squashes, including pumpkins, and melons were visible as the canopy started to die back. Third cutting alfalfa was baled and field corn harvest was in full swing.

Eastern Washington reported typical fall days, no precipitation and dry conditions. Peaches, nectarines, onions, carrots, and dry beans were being harvested. Buckwheat was swathed along with fourth cutting of alfalfa and some grass hay. Some fourth cutting hay was also baled. The planted winter wheat emerged fairly rapidly.



USDA Offers Help to Fire-Affected Farmers and Ranchers

The [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#) (USDA) reminds farmers and ranchers affected by the recent wildfires in Washington State that USDA has programs to assist with their recovery efforts.

The [Farm Service Agency](#) (FSA) can assist farmers and ranchers who lost livestock, grazing land, fences or eligible trees, bushes and vines as a result of a natural disaster. FSA administers a suite of safety-net programs to help producers recover from eligible losses, including the [Livestock Indemnity Program](#), the [Livestock Forage Disaster Program](#), the [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program](#), and the [Tree Assistance Program](#).

In addition, the FSA [Emergency Conservation Program](#) provides funding and technical assistance for farmers and ranchers to rehabilitate farmland damaged by natural disasters and for carrying out emergency water conservation measures in periods of severe drought. Producers located in counties that received a primary or contiguous disaster designation are eligible for low-interest [emergency loans](#) to help them recover from production and physical losses. Compensation is also available to producers who purchased coverage through the [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program](#), which protects non-insurable crops against natural disasters that result in lower yields, crop losses or prevented planting.

Visit <http://go.usa.gov/3eDeF> to learn more about USDA disaster preparedness and response. For more information on USDA disaster assistance programs, please contact your local USDA Service Center. To find your local USDA Service Center go to <http://offices.usda.gov>.



In Short

Grant: Fund-a-Farmer grants

Food Animal Concerns Trust (FACT) is accepting applications from livestock farmers for its Fund-a-Farmer grants, provided to qualifying humane farmers who need assistance in improving the welfare of their farm animals. Grants of up to \$2,500 will be awarded for projects that create and/or improve access to pasture-based systems.

[Fund-a-Farmer Grants](#)

Applications must be submitted online by November 3, 2015.

Job Opening: San Juan County Extension Director

This is a twelve-month, non-tenured, promotion track faculty position at the rank of Assistant or Assoc. Professor, within WSU Extension in the College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences (CAHNRS). The position is headquartered at the WSU Extension San Juan County Office in Friday Harbor, WA. Screening of application packets will begin on **Nov. 6, 2015**. Apply by visiting: www.wsujobs.com.

[Full announcement here.](#) (PDF)

Job Opening: PCC Farmland Trust

We are seeking a highly organized, career-minded Program Assistant. This position is 32 or 40 hours per week to support: fund development and donation processing for the fundraising team, record keeping and contracts support for the farmland conservation team, and general office management and operational support for the office, including administrative support for the Trust's board of directors.

[View the full position description and process.](#) (PDF)

Majoring in Food: Colleges Offering More Courses, Degrees

From [Civil Eats](#) - By [Steve Holt](#) on [September 22, 2015](#)

When professor Jennifer Otten stands in front of her first classes this Fall, she'll see a student in every seat and know that the names of dozens more fill a waiting list. Each of the undergraduate courses she teaches at the University of Washington in Seattle have more than doubled since she started teaching them three years ago, outgrowing lecture halls and even attracting the attention of graduate students hoping to sit in.

What exactly is luring so many students to Otten's classes? Is she offering an easy A?

On the contrary, the courses in question have names like "Food Studies: Harvest to Health" and "U.S. Food and Nutrition Policy," niche subjects that would have attracted a much smaller and more specialized student population just a few years ago. These days, though, UW undergrads from every major flock to the university's ever-expanding slate of food courses—often with little knowledge of the topic, says Otten. "I have really high attendance, which is unusual for an undergraduate class," she says, adding that the students are also often more willing to participate than usual.

Read the story here: <http://civileats.com/2015/09/22/majoring-in-food-colleges-offering-more-courses-degrees/>

Puget Sound Fresh app wins national award for best new mobile app

Western Washington farmers and consumers who support local food already love the [Puget Sound Fresh app](#). Both Android and Apple users can use the app to find more than 350 farms and farmers markets, as well as recipes, harvest calendars and events.

Now the Fresh app has won a "[Savvy Award](#)" for best new mobile app from the City-County Communications & Marketing Association (3CMA). The Savvy Awards recognize outstanding local government achievements in communications, public-sector marketing and citizen-government relationships.

Pierce County partnered with neighboring agencies, the University of Washington Tacoma and non-profit Cascade Harvest Coalition to create the app. It is designed to be a farm guide that fits on a phone. 3CMA judges were greatly impressed with the app's user-friendly design. "We loved that this app has a clearly defined target use and that it is so well done! It's a win-win for consumers, local farmers, and the county."

The app has also been a useful tool for connecting consumers with farmers.



Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program Review

State officials and legislators are looking for your thoughts about if and how to revise the 25-year-old Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP), which is the state's grant program for wildlife conservation lands, state and local parks, trails, natural areas, and working farms and ranches.

Please take a [short survey](#) by Oct. 18 to share your insights about the WWRP.

The Legislature created the WWRP in 1990 to give the state a way to invest in valuable outdoor recreation areas and wildlife habitat conservation lands. They wanted to protect critical habitat and make sure our kids, grandkids, and future generations had places to recreate, and they wanted to do it before the land was developed. In its 25-year history, the grant program has funded projects in nearly every county of the state.

As state officials review the program, they are looking to see if the program is accomplishing what it set out to and what might need to change going forward. So now's the time to give them thoughts.



Comments Needed: State Farmland Preservation Account

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board is proposing changes to policies and evaluation criteria that will affect farmland preservation project applications in 2016. The proposed changes are available on the Recreation and Conservation Office's [Web site](#).

RCO is seeking comment on proposed policy and evaluation criteria changes to the Farmland Preservation program including: Definition of Farmland, Applications with More than One Parcel, Amount of Impervious Surface, Public Access, Scope Changes, and Evaluation Criteria.

How to Comment

Comments are due by 5 p.m. October 16, 2015. Submit comments to policychanges@rco.wa.gov or mail to RCO, ATTN: Leslie Connelly, P.O. Box 40917, Olympia, WA 98504-0917.

What is Next?

RCO staff will review comments received, make appropriate revisions, and prepare a final draft. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board will consider these policy changes for approval at its meeting on November 18-19, 2015, in Olympia. Public comments are also welcome at the meeting.

Questions?

Contact Leslie Connelly, Natural Resource Policy Specialist at (360) 902-3080, TDD (360) 902-1992 or leslie.connelly@rco.wa.gov

Washington Small Fruit Conference: December 2-4

The Washington Small Fruit Conference is a 3-day conference with latest relevant research information delivered by the scientists performing the research. Lunches each day are provided. This conference is presented in association with the Lynden Ag Show, a trade show featuring vendors serving the small fruit community.

Discounted early registration rates are good thru October 18th.

Information on the Conference can be found here: <http://whatcom.wsu.edu/ag/edu/sfc/>

Agenda available here: <http://whatcom.wsu.edu/ag/edu/sfc/agenda.html>

Registration here: <https://www.regonline.com/builder/site/Default.aspx?EventID=1657394>

Washington
Small Fruit
Conference

Mason County 2015 Cultivating Success Program

Washington State University Extension Mason County is launching its Cultivating Success program. This series makes it easier to start and maintain a successful farm business. In the program, Agriculture Entrepreneurship and Business Planning, students hear from accountants, bankers, and other farmers to complete a business plan.

The course takes place Tuesday evenings from 6pm – 9pm running from October 20th – December 8th. Tuition is \$250 per family. The course will be held in downtown Shelton and can be taken for Continuing Education Units.

Remote classrooms with live webinars will be available based on the location of registered participants. The class is open to residents of Mason, Thurston, and Grays Harbor Counties.

Online Registration: <http://masoncountysmallfarms.brownpapertickets.com/>

More information: www.cultivatingsuccess.wsu.edu

New USDA reports studies food choices and food security

Report: Food Choices and Store Proximity

This report investigates the correlation between living in low-income, low-access (LILA) areas and the purchase of 14 major food groups in order to estimate the effect on diet quality of living in LILA areas. Check out the report summary and entire report by going to:

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err-economic-research-report/err195.aspx>

Understanding how access to supermarkets affects the healthfulness of food purchases may help policymakers determine the value of attracting supermarkets to underserved areas. USDA's Economic Research Service conducted two large-scale studies to define low-food access areas and to identify the population living in those areas.



Report: Household Food Security in the United States in 2014

This report presents statistics from the annual survey covering households' food security, food expenditures, and use of Federal food and nutrition assistance programs in 2014. Check out the report summary and entire report by going to:

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err-economic-research-report/err194.aspx>

What Did the Study Find?

The estimated percentage of U.S. households that were food insecure remained essentially unchanged from 2013 to 2014; however, food insecurity was down from a high of 14.9 percent in 2011. The percentage of households with food insecurity in the severe range—described as very low food security—was unchanged.

USDA Awards \$34.3 Million for local access to food

USDA Awards \$34.3 Million to Support Communities' Local Foods Infrastructure, Increase Access to Fruits and Vegetables

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack recently announced nearly \$35 million in new funding through four grant programs to support local and regional food systems, including farmers markets. Secretary Vilsack has named strengthening local food systems as one of the four pillars of USDA's efforts to revitalize rural economies and communities. Purchases of locally-produced food have surged to nearly \$12 billion under Secretary Vilsack's leadership, while the number of farmers markets has exploded to more than 8,500 from 5,274 in 2009.

Farmers Market Promotion Program - [FY 2015 \(pdf\)](#) - results for WA on page 32

Local Food Promotion Program - [FY 2015 \(pdf\)](#) - results for WA begin on page 29

Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program - [FY 2015 \(pdf\)](#) - results for WA on page 2

Washington received over \$880,000 for several projects across the state.

WASHINGTON STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Mark Your Calendars

Tilth Farm Walk Series: October 26 – Solar Energy on the Farm II Orting, WA 98360

Register Online at <http://bit.ly/FW2015TahomaFarms> or call 206-632-7506. Free cost to attend, pre-registration required to receive a lunch.

Learn how Tahoma Farms is using solar power not only to make their farm operations more environmentally sustainable but also to increase the farm's financial stability.

CLE: Easements in Washington - November 20 - Seattle

Easements and easement terms continue to become increasingly complex as they mirror legal and technical changes in our society. What was a simple temporary construction easement 30 years ago now has ramifications ranging from future development rights to tort claims.

[View Agenda, Faculty, and Pricing](#) or [Register Now](#)

2015 Tilth Producers of Washington Annual Conference Spokane Convention Center November 13-15, 2015

The Tilth Producers 2015 annual conference returns to Eastern Washington, bringing three full days of quality education and networking opportunities.

Registration details at:

<http://tilthproducers.org/programs/conference-2/registration/>

2015-2016 WA Fair Dates

Come participate and enjoy one of the many local fairs happening across Washington this summer. Fairs are a great place to see the next generation of farmers, and maybe pick up some tips!

For a full list of dates and locations, please go to:

http://www.wastatefairs.com/index_files/Fair_Dates.htm

U.S. House Ag Committee Hearing October 7, 2015

The House Committee on Agriculture will hold a full committee public hearing to review the development of the 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans on Wednesday, Oct. 7, 2015 – 9:00 a.m. eastern.

More details available by going to:

<http://agriculture.house.gov/>

Business of Making Hard Cider November 6, 2015 - Burlington WA

The Northwest Agriculture Business Center, WSU - Northwest Washington Research & Extension Center, and the Northwest Cider Association will present a one-day cider making business development workshop for new or existing operations.

Details here:

<http://goo.gl/BHn9HP>

Cider & Perry Orchardng Workshop October 30, 2015 - Quincy, WA

The Northwest Cider Association presents a 1-day Cider & Perry Orchardng Workshop

Location: Quincy Fire Station, 1201 Central Avenue South, Quincy 98848

Hours: 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM

Fee: \$95/person, includes beverages & lunch

Registration and more details by going to: www.agbizcenter.org.

Access to Capital for Beginning, Minority, and U.S. Veteran Farmers Wednesday, October 28 Mt. Vernon, WA

Meet face-to-face with representatives of lending programs and financial institutions that provide loans from less than \$5,000 to more than \$300,000.

Registration is \$20, includes lunch, refreshments, and beverages. Register at: [Access To Capital For Beginning, Minority And U.S. Veteran Farmers](#)

Whidbey Bread and Whole Grain Workshop, October 16 & 17

The 2015 Whidbey Bread and Whole Grain workshop is dedicated to helping the home baker learn from professional bakers how to bake (truly!) delicious and nourishing whole grain artisan bread, pasta, croissants, and pastries in the home kitchen. The day and a half workshop will take you from field, to milling and into the kitchen on the use of whole grains. **See more information and register online [here](#).**

“OUR MISSION IS TO PROMOTE THE VITALITY OF FARMING, FARMERS, AND RANCHERS BY ENSURING THAT WE WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE PRODUCTIVE AGRICULTURAL LANDS IN WASHINGTON STATE. WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS THROUGH POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNOR, THE LEGISLATURE, THE OFFICE OF FARMLAND PRESERVATION AND OTHERS AND BY ENLISTING PUBLIC SUPPORT. PROGRAMS WILL BE VOLUNTARY, RECOGNIZE LOCAL PRIORITIES, AND PROVIDE FOR ECONOMIC INCENTIVES.”